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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 000773

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/19/2013
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: AGENDA PARA LA TRANSICION LEADERS COMPLAIN ABOUT
LACK OF RESOURCES

REF: A. HAVANA 760
[1](#)B. FARRAR E-MAIL 09-18-08

Classified By: COM Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Agenda para la Transicion leaders argued forcefully that lack of resources and the added demands brought about by the recent hurricanes threaten the viability of the opposition in Cuba. They urged quick action to get resources to them. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Agenda para la Transicion leaders Martha Beatriz Roque (MBR) and Vladimiro Roca complained strongly to P/E Counselor about the lack of U.S. assistance to Cuba following hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Though they acknowledged that the GOC's obstinacy and obstructionism make the situation much worse, they thought that there should be some way that the USG could get more funds to the island, though they had no suggestions as to what means might be available. They again complained that they had not yet gotten a response to the letters they had written to the President and to Cuban President Raul Castro with suggestions for ways to get help to the Cuban people.

[1](#)3. (C) The two also expressed concern that money being collected in the Cuban community in Miami would not be able to reach people in need. MBR said she had heard on the radio from Miami that CANF had already sent \$250k to Cuba, and wondered how it had been sent and to whom it had been delivered. They lamented that their phone calls to CANF had gone unanswered.

[1](#)4. (C) The Agenda para la Transicion has been collecting names of individuals who suffered some serious loss in the storms, and who would be unlikely to receive any assistance from the GOC. The list now contains about 400 names and addresses. The two lamented that, aside from compiling the list, they have no resources to assist those who have suffered losses as a result of hurricanes Gustav and Ike. They requested that assistance from the U.S. be channeled directly to these individuals as it is certain they will receive no help from the government of Cuba. Per refs A and B, USINT has forwarded this list to USAID to work with grantees to provide assistance.

[1](#)5. (C) Both argued that the GOC was in the process of carrying out the recovery from the hurricanes on the backs of the Cuban people. They said the gasoline price increase announced the day before Hurricane Ike struck and the likely increases in food prices will suck resources from ordinary Cubans and put them in the hands of the government, which will use them to concentrate recovery efforts on major infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and the electrical power grid. Citing our press information sheet and its mention of the amount of food purchases that have been

licensed, they contended that the USG is complicit with the GOC in this plot, as food imported from the U.S. will be sold at inflated prices to raise revenue for the government.

¶6. (C) All of the members of the Agenda para la Transicion, but most vocally MBR and Vlad Roca, have been chafing at the lack of resources available to them ever since the May/June "scandals" involving alleged payments to the opposition. The hurricanes have further crystallized their sense that the dissident movement is being marginalized because of its lack of resources. They believe their twin rivals in the Miami Cuban community and the GOC are now in a position to make them irrelevant to the future of Cuba. The government profits because the dissidents can no longer produce printed material, nor travel, nor use electronic media (including cell phone), for lack of funding. The Miami Cuban community benefits because it can apply resources on the island, and can substitute for a moribund home grown opposition.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: The strong comments regarding "USG complicity" and the threat from the Miami Cuban community are mostly a reflection of a genuinely felt fear among many members of the opposition that the hurricanes have wounded the political opposition even more than they have the government, and that the government will benefit from outside assistance the opposition will not see. As the availability of resources has declined in the past few months due to increased GOC pressure, it is true that opposition activity has also dropped. But it is not clear that lack of resources is the only problem. Increasingly effective, but not egregiously heavy-handed, measures by the GOC have also limited opposition activity. As more of the FY 2008 assistance that is directed toward the opposition comes on

line, however, their present pique hopefully will begin to diminish.

FARRAR